



## NAGHMEH ABEDINI WIFE OF PASTOR JAILED IN IRAN

**PLEA FOR RELEASE** - Naghmeah Abedini, wife of American pastor Saeed Abedini, testifies before the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee on June 2, recommending that any nuclear deal with Iran include the release of Americans held in captivity in the radical Muslim theocratic dictatorship. Her husband has been imprisoned in Iran since 2012. (BF screen capture courtesy of FoxNews.)

## Naghmeah Abedini: tie captive release to Iran nuclear deal

**WASHINGTON (BP and local reports)** - The release of Americans imprisoned in Iran should be a condition of any nuclear deal with the historically Persian nation, the wife of imprisoned American pastor Saeed Abedini told the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee on June 2.

Following testimony from Neghmeah Abedini and the families of other U.S. citizens imprisoned or missing in Iran, the committee passed a



S. ABEDINI

resolution stating, "Iran should release all detained United States citizens immediately and provide any information it possesses regarding any United States citizens that have disappeared within its borders."

Naghmeah Abedini said she appreciated that the captive Americans are "being discussed on the sidelines" of nuclear talks, "but they're still not home. Where's the action? Where's the resolve? I don't see any resolve."

"Iran continues to shrug it off and not really respond to discussions on the sidelines. ... This is crucial time. Iran has to feel some pressure to want to release the Americans. They're not going to do it through sideline discussions. I hope there's some pressure as this is a crucial time to bring these Americans home and end [the] pain and suffering of all of our families," Naghmeah Abedini said, according to video of her testimony posted on the Save Saeed Facebook page.

see ABEDINI on p. 9

## Luter to serve as NAMB ambassador

**ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)** - The North American Mission Board (NAMB) has named Fred Luter, senior pastor of Franklin Avenue Church in New Orleans and the first African American president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), as its new national African American ambassador.

In that role, Luter will focus on involving more African American churches in the SBC and in church planting. "We still have a lot of lost souls out there who aren't in anyone's church," Luter said. "One of the primary messages I'll have for pastors is to encourage them to have compas-

sion for the lost. If we're going to be successful in church planting, that has to happen."

Luter will speak on behalf of NAMB throughout the year and represent the mission board at a variety of SBC events, sharing NAMB's goal to increase the number of African American churches in the convention from 4,000 to more than 5,000 in the next five years.

He will continue to serve as senior pastor of Franklin Avenue Church.



LUTER

Luter noted that Southern Baptists have made progress involving African American churches since his early days as a pastor in New Orleans. NAMB has reported African American church plants increased by nearly 83% from 1998-2011.

"We've had a lot of African Americans plant churches and a lot of African American churches to join the SBC," Luter said, "but as the old saying goes, 'We've

see LUTER on p. 9

## MC relations with student veterans under microscope

### FINAL IN A TWO-PART SERIES

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

Is Mississippi College (MC) in Clinton as military-hostile as the national news media made the university out to be when they reported two weeks ago that a student veteran had been suspended by the school? Hardly, according to a statement released by the university shortly after news outlets from around the world descended on the Baptist-affiliated school.

"On Monday, May 25, Campus Reform, a web-based news website, ran an inaccurate story related to the suspension of Jeremy Rawls, a Marine combat veteran who is a Mississippi College student. Due to federal educational privacy regulations, we are unable to release specific information related to students, but we want to clarify that Mr. Rawls was not suspended for the reasons the story revealed."

"Campus Reform stated that Mr. Rawls was suspended from Mississippi College specifically because of his request to switch counselors. This statement is not true. While Mississippi College cannot specify the details related to Mr. Rawls' temporary suspension, we want to firmly deny these accusations. In addition, the suspension did not occur because he is a Marine combat veteran," the MC statement explained.

Campus Reform retracted the original article on May 27 under an Editor's Note. "After speaking with the college and Rawls, new documentation has been released that calls into question reasoning presented in the original story," wrote editor-in-chief Caleb Bonham in the lengthy statement, which can be viewed along with the original article at [www.campusreform.org/?ID=6527](http://www.campusreform.org/?ID=6527).

In a statement provided to The Baptist Record, Rawls

wrote, "Everything I have stated has been true. If the school states that I was not suspended due to me being a threat, I am not aware of any other reason. Due to their attempt to skirt the subject, I have requested my records, in full, under the rights provided by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)."

"Hopefully we will find this elusive rabbit as we continue to chase it down the hole. For clarity, Dr. Royce was one of the first to know about my situation, as he was the main recipient of my email. The same email that got me suspended. As a Christian, my resolve will remain. God put me on this path and I will see it through."

In December 2014, Mississippi College was named one of the nation's most military-friendly schools as defined by the Military Advanced Education guide, the MC statement points out. MC has also been recognized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

see MC on p. 9



ROYCE



RAWLS

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

# Most valuable

**P**ick any church, and chances are there's a most valuable member of the team there who often gets taken for granted even though the church couldn't do without her. Is she the faithful, 30-year organist? Certainly that lady is valuable, but she isn't the person. How about the WMU president, who rallies the troops and helps manage so many important programs around the church? Another good guess, but wrong again.

The answer is: The Minister's Wife. As if to make the point any more unmistakable, far too many of us are probably thinking right now, "Oops! The minister is married, isn't he? I must have forgotten." Yes, the minister is married and, to the surprise of a lot of folks, he is married to a living, breathing human being with feelings. We tend to forget that.

Where would we be without this faithful tribe known as ministers' wives? Whether in a church with a single staffer — the pastor — or a church with a dozen or more ministers, these behind-the-scenes worker bees are often the real reason church events go so smoothly.

Ministers' duties often mean postponing or even canceling relationship time between a husband and wife that so many of the rest of us take for granted. Much-antic-

ipated (and much-needed) family vacations are disrupted so the minister can return to town to preach a funeral. When the normal problems of raising children in our sin-filled culture show up in the minister's family, his wife knows the pastor is often somewhere else ministering to some other parents or counseling someone else's children.

All too often, she bears these personal burdens alone. The same goes for problems at church and the comments of inconsiderate people who are unnecessarily critical of her husband's ministry or harsh about her family's shortcomings which — unlike most of the rest of us — are committed in a fishbowl for all to see. They seldom ask for help and never expect pity.

As fellow travelers on life's Christian journey, we must make it a priority to minister to these beautiful sisters every day as well as when they and their families are hurting. They need to know we are praying for them, and they need to know we are willing to lighten their enormous load any way we can help.

Pray it, and then show by your actions and conduct that you meant it when you prayed it. You can be sure there is a most valuable member of your team out there who won't soon forget it.

**\*RULE # 1 FOR EFFECTIVENESS IN THE PASTORAL MINISTRY: MARRY WELL.\***



## Attaining Christ's character

**I**t stands to reason that the process of following Jesus should build a life branded by the character of Christ. So why is our character so very different at times? Enter sin.

Sin, by definition, is missing God's intended mark. What is His mark? Grace and truth. Our deviation from God's mark causes us to embrace one and reject the other. Our damaged character finds appeal in one of two insidious and character-distorting forms of sin:

■ **The sin of sensuality (license).** A life of sensuality leads to character damaged and enslaved by obsessive addictions of every shape. In Jesus' parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15:11-31), this is the younger brother.

■ **The sin of pride (legalism).** A life of pride leads to a character deformed by an arrogant self-righteousness and pseudo-spiritual superiority. In Jesus' parable of the Lost Son, this is the older and equally lost brother.

Growing up and learning to navigate the icy winter roads of Canada, one of the first things my father taught me was the danger of oversteering — the tendency to overcompensate when starting to lose traction and beginning to spin. It seems at first like a natural response but soon it leaves the inexperienced driver completely out of control. Instead of correcting a slight skid, he finds himself spinning much faster in the opposite direction.

We can readily see spiritual oversteer regarding the Kingdom character of grace and truth. It may come from an attachment to a historical movement ("this is truth"); following a personality ("this is who I want to be"); spiritual lethargy ("this is who I am"); the need to over-define mystery ("this is who God is"); or the desire to make personal applications universal ("this is how you should be").

Attempting to correct without the character of Christ as our guide usually leaves us in worse shape than when we started.

What are the symptoms of spiritual oversteer? When we singularly accentuate and consequently reduce the hallmarks of God's glory (grace and truth), we find certain symptoms that indicate we are now on a road to damaged character.

Often our attachment to ideologies leads us to embrace extreme and rigid positions. This fanaticism drives us to an understanding of truth devoid of the grace of Christ. Conversely, our escape into a twisted understanding of grace sends us down a destructive path of self-fulfillment through sensual gratification.



## Guest opinion

with Jeff Christopherson

The end is always the same. Selfish grace without truth leads to bankrupt character.

Back and forth we have swerved past the character of Christ in our attempts to self-correct. From liberalism (grace in isolation), to fundamentalism (truth in isolation), to the emerging church (grace in isolation), to the new orthodoxy (truth in isolation). From ditch to ditch we attempt to be the church of Jesus Christ and see the glory of God.

How can I leave oversteer and lead with the character of Christ? The good news is that in Christ we have two spiritual realities that can assist us when we oversteer, either personally or corporately, to guide us into the mystery of grace and truth.

■ **The cross of Christ.** If the sin of sensuality is seeing ourselves small and therefore living in a way that is less than God created us to be, then what higher expression of grace could there be than the cross of Jesus Christ? With His sacrifice He has once and for all demonstrated the eternal value that we have to the Father.

Unworthy though we may be, we are not worthless. Whenever we are tempted to level in grace by excluding truth, we need only to gaze at the cross to remind ourselves of the high price paid for our position of holiness (2 Corinthians 5:21). The cross is history's best picture of absolute grace.

■ **The throne of Christ.** Spiritual arrogance becomes difficult to maintain when we compare our sullied morality to the holiness of our sovereign King who sits without blemish on an eternal throne. Whenever we are tempted to swagger in our distorted version of truth without grace, remember that only One sits in perfection (Isaiah 64:6).

The riverbanks of spiritual protection that keep us flowing in the character of Christ are His grace and His truth. By daily embracing both, we find ourselves walking closely behind our King — and the world takes note.

Christopherson is vice president for the North American Mission Board's Canada region and its Send City Network. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

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# NAMB chaplaincy director: 'much more' to Marine dismissal

JACKSONVILLE, N.C. (BP) — Although evangelical commentators have protested the court-martial conviction of a Marine who defied an order to remove a Bible verse from her workstation, the North American Mission Board (NAMB) executive director of chaplaincy says believers should reserve judgment because there likely is "much more to this particular story than Scriptures that were just in a public place."

When news breaks of an apparent religious liberty violation like this case, "everyone is alarmed," Douglas Carver, the former U.S. Army chief of chaplains, told Baptist Press, but usually "as you begin to dig," there's "more to the issue."

Carver added, "From my perspective of 38 years in the military, I have found no more fair legal process than military justice. It's thorough. It's fair. It's merciful."

The Marine at the center of the case, Lance Corporal Monifa Sterling, has appealed her conviction to the highest military court, the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.

She was convicted of violating a lawful order after refusing to obey a staff sergeant's 2013 order to remove three copies of Isaiah 54:17 — "No weapon formed against me shall prosper" — from her computer tower, monitor, and desk, the Military Times reported.

Sterling served at the time at North Carolina's Camp Lejeune handling complaints from Marines about their military identification cards.

Following Sterling's refusal to remove the verses, the staff sergeant removed them herself but Sterling replaced them and the staff sergeant removed the replacements as well. That sequence, along with other low-level misconduct allegations, led to Sterling's conviction and a sentence of reduction in rank to E-1 and a bad conduct discharge.

The Navy-Marine Corps Court of Appeals upheld Sterling's conviction in February, stating the verse display "could be interpreted as combative" and "could easily be seen as contrary to good order and discipline," accord-

ing to the Times. Sterling has received help in her latest appeal from the Christian legal organization Liberty Institute and former U.S. solicitor general Paul Clement, who argued the 2014 Hobby Lobby case before the Supreme Court.

Multiple generals likely have reviewed Sterling's case by this point in the military justice process, Carver said, and believers should "withhold judgment" in the absence of full information about the conviction. "We need to pray for all those involved in this particular situation," he said.

Sterling, a Christian of Haitian descent, argues that being forced to remove the verse violated her First Amendment right to religious expression and her protection under the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA).

One reason cited by the Navy-Marine Corps Court of Appeals for denying Sterling's appeal was the verse's visibility to other Marines, according to the Times. "The risk that such exposure could impact the morale or discipline of the command is not slight," the court concluded.

Carver explained that members of the military may have religious symbols in their personal workspaces, but religious expressions are not permitted which attack other faiths or are used by individuals in authority in an intimidating manner.

A bad-conduct discharge is a serious matter, Carver said, and likely indicates military officials believed a junior noncommissioned officer like Sterling "should have been a little more sensitive to the rules and regulations and the standards... required by her rank."

Sterling's attorneys said her case could set a precedent.

"This is an extremely important case that provides the court the opportunity to reaffirm that [the Religious Freedom Restoration Act] applies within the armed forces," Clement said in a Liberty Institute news release. "Religious freedom is such an important issue for our military, and we hope the court will clarify this issue and confirm that RFRA protects our troops."



CARVER



STERLING



## LifeWay set to preview 2016 Vacation Bible School theme

NASHVILLE (BP) — While 2015 Vacation Bible Schools (VBS) are going full tilt this summer, next summer kids will have the opportunity to dive past the surface and go deeper into God's Word with "Submerged," from LifeWay Christian Resources.

The theme helps challenge a culture consumed with celebrity — one marked by the image of beauty and popularity, said LifeWay VBS specialist Jerry Wooley.

"It's a value system that's unrealistic and an impossibility to achieve or maintain," he said. "During Submerged, kids will discover it's not what's on the surface that matters, but the internal truth that only God can see."

Each day of next year's VBS, students will explore the way Jesus saw people and examine the truth of the key verse, Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way."

"This is an adventure that will take us not only to the depths of the ocean but to the depths of our hearts as well," Wooley said. "We will be challenged to let God not only search our hearts, but

"During Submerged, kids will discover it's not what's on the surface that matters, but the internal truth that only God can see... This is an adventure that will take us not only to the depths of the ocean but to the depths of our hearts as well. We will be challenged to let God not only search our hearts, but reveal the truths of our hearts as well."

Jerry Wooley

LifeWay VBS specialist

reveal the truths of our hearts as well."

VBS remains one of the most effective evangelistic events for churches. Using the most recent statistics available, Wooley said nearly three million people participated in VBS at a local church in 2014. Approximately 80,000 children made professions of faith during those weeks and more than one million unchurched individuals were identified as a result.

Wooley believes the same could happen again next summer as Submerged reveals a person's greatest need. "God sees our heart and knows our thoughts," he said. "He sees

what lies below the image we want the world to see, and He loves us anyway. He sees and knows our true potential, our sin, and our need for a Savior."

For those ready to start planning for next summer, VBS 2016 Jump Start Kits will be available for purchase in October, with other resources scheduled to be available in December.

VBS 2016 Preview events, designed to give leaders a hands-on opportunity with the new material, are scheduled for January in Ridgecrest, N.C.; Fort Worth, Texas; and Nashville. For more information, visit LifeWay.com/VBS.

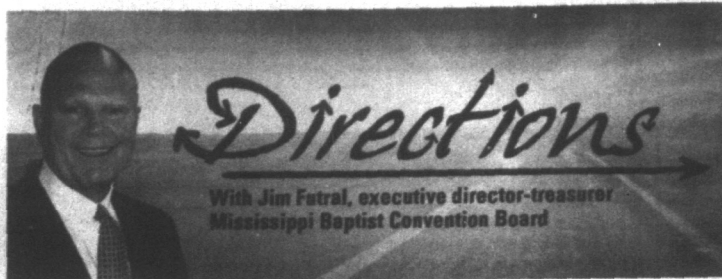
"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way."

Psalm 139:23-24

**M**y wife and I had been out of town for most of the week. We got in on Friday evening and on Saturday morning I awoke to take care of some of my Saturday morning chores. One of those chores was getting the garbage out by the road to be picked up. I looked inside the garbage can only to discover it was empty, and it seemed as though it would be rather foolish to put an empty garbage can out, but then it quickly hit me we had not been there. Since the two of us are the main two messer-uppers in our house, things had stayed clean and unmessed up.

I got to thinking about how messy we are. I'm talking about people and other creatures. Have you ever thought about how much time we spend just cleaning all the stuff that we get messed up and dirty? We wash the clothes. We wash us. We wash our hair; well, some people do. We clean the floors. We clean the yard. We clean the car. We wash dishes. Wherever you find people, you often find that it gets messy.

Now, I'm not excluding some other messy things. If you've got a dog or a cat or a bird or a fishbowl or a horse or sheep or cows, you get the picture. It's a messy world and as I thought about it, I thought that is a good thing. We could keep our house immaculate and nothing would ever be out of place and nothing would ever get dirty if we just stayed away. Just let it sit there, locked up and nothing going on, no meals ever cooked, no family and friends ever by,



## No Garbage

no laughter, no celebrations and everything would be clean and calm.

Long before I ever figured this out the wise man Solomon noted it and in Proverbs 14:4 he said, "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean." Isn't that a fascinating thought? With that in mind, I suppose a better title for this article rather than "No Garbage" would be a title "In Praise of Garbage." The truth is that the messiness of life is an expression that life is actually going on and that, my friends, is a good thing.

It is the dilemma that sometimes exists in churches. For as churches begin to grow and expand their programs and involve more people, it is very likely that things may get a little messy at times. When churches seek to be what New Testament churches ought to encompass

in being multi-generational or multi-linguistic or multi-racial or multi-political, there are going to be people with differing views at different phases of life and it can get messy. Truth is that the church is not just to focus on all these multi-facets, but on the one facet of following Jesus. He has a way of creating a right attitude and keeping us on track and on focus as we follow Him, but it does not mean that there won't be a sheep wandering away from the fold or a child that is not exactly as perfect as your child is or a senior adult in the midst of many of the failures in life or disabilities that they may be faced with. Life gets a little bit messy.

Well, why not do this and solve all the mess problems? Just clean up the church real good, lock all the doors, have no activities for the kids, don't generate

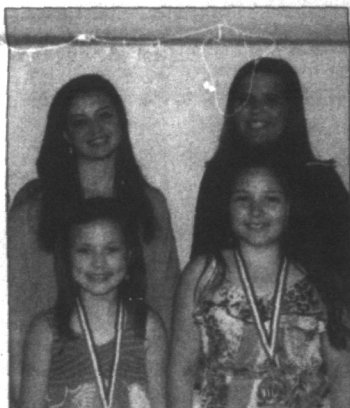
a lot of energy, events, or excitement and you may find that everything stays clean as a whistle and your church is empty. The same thing is true in a family where things are always in a mess mode for all of us, not just the kids or grandkids. For you see, everyone is growing at a different pace and everyone is involved in different activities and all of us have different needs that probably will create their own messiness and garbage pile. Families live above all the messiness. They find a way to help clean up and enjoy the celebration that may be going on.

The other half of Solomon's Proverb in 14:4 points out that "but much increase is by the strength of the ox." Get that whole picture. Where there is no ox, the crib is clean, but when the ox is missing, there are a lot of things that are beneficial. So if things are messy, thank God. For while cleanliness might be wonderful there are tremendous benefits and blessings that come with the messiness. I suppose you could say that messiness and garbage are the costs of life itself; for church, for family, for each of us. For with each of us comes the spills, the broken things, the smudges and the dirty things, all of which need attention but many of which have brought great blessings.

While I didn't have to carry the garbage out on Saturday morning, the next Saturday I said, "Thank you, God, that we have some garbage today."

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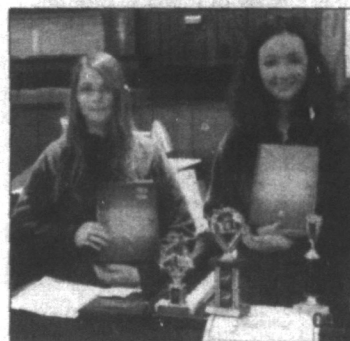
## Bible Drill



**HIGH HILL CHURCH, NESHOMA COUNTY,** recognizes its Bible drillers.



**CALVARY CHURCH, COLUMBIA,** recognizes its Bible drillers.



**HARDY CHURCH, GRENADA,** recognizes its Bible drillers.



**MAYBANK CHURCH, PINE BELT ASSOCIATION,** recognized their 3rd - 6th grade Girls in Action who participated in the church Bible drills. They are shown with leader Beth Bonin. Jon Kittrell, pastor.

## BIBL i O C I P H E R

SNC CRA GEML JXVV UHZA, JRAT CRA

SFXGAYFHHZ LREVV SA CEPAT EJEM

KFHZ CRAZ, ETG CRAT'LREVV CRAM

KELC XT CRHLA GEML.

ZEFP CJH: CJATCM

Clue:  $S = B$

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 1:15

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## Just for the Record



The women's ministry of **SLAYDEN CHURCH, MARSHALL ASSOCIATION**, sponsored Ladies Wear Many Hats, a Mother's Day event. A love offering was taken for needy babies and mothers.



**NEWHEBRON CHURCH, NEWHEBRON**, honored Glenda Westmoreland for 25 years of service. Shown are Westmoreland and pastor Mike Grenn.



The youth of **MT. MORIAH CHURCH, HOLLY SPRINGS**, worked in the rain to have a rummage sale and carwash. The proceeds went to the Baptist Children's Village Mother's Day offering.



**HARMONY CHURCH, LOUISVILLE**, recognized its seniors. Shown are Kirk Sisson, Chelsea Smith, Madison Johnson, and Gentry Hodge.



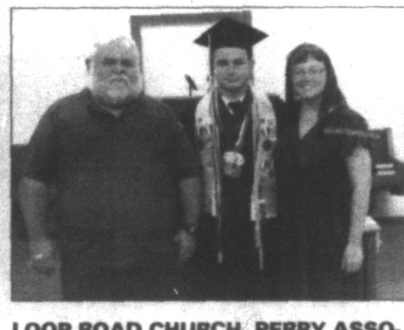
**BEULAH CHURCH, DECATUR**, recognized its graduates May 24. Shown are Graham Murphree, Meagan Higginbotham, Blake Rigdon, and Austin Faulkner.



**TED CHURCH, SMITH COUNTY**, recognized graduate Dakota Stringer, shown with pastor James Shumaker.



Charles King, Chairman of the Zack Ross Memorial Mission Fund, **SLAYDEN CHURCH, MARSHALL ASSOCIATION**, presented pastor Rusty Fair and his daughter Annsleigh with \$1000 gifts to go toward their mission trip to Honduras.

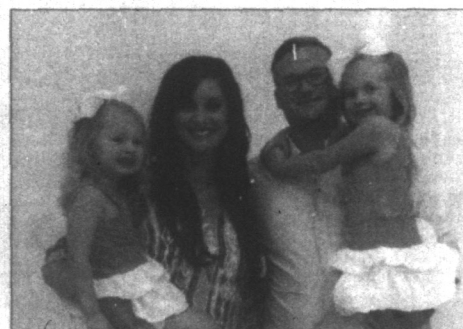


**LOOP ROAD CHURCH, PERRY ASSOCIATION**, recognized high school graduate Austin Malone May 17 with a baccalaureate service and Bible. He is shown with his parents, Pug and Tracey.

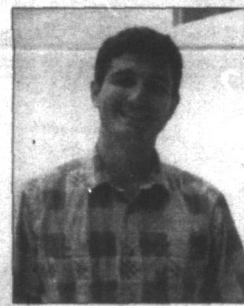
## Staff Changes



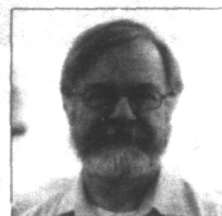
**ANTIOCH CHURCH, BRUCE**, has called Eric Payne as pastor Apr. 19. He is shown with his wife, Jennifer, daughter Sydney, and sons Shawn, Sawyer, and Selby. He comes from Grace Point Fellowship Church, Batesville.



**FIRST CHURCH, OLOH, SUMRALL**, has called Andy Baker as senior pastor. He was previously Associate Pastor of Students & Pastoral Care at the church. He is shown with his wife, Elizabeth, and daughters, Ava and Ella. The church has also called Jake Gill as youth minister.



## College News



(At left) Susan Musselwhite has received the Distinguished Staff Member Award at **MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE**. She is assistant director of athletics. She oversees coaches and more than 400 student athletes in the areas of rules, recruiting, and internal matters, including the guidelines of the NCAA, the Gulf South Conference and Mississippi College. (At right) Steve Cook has been selected **MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE** Professor of the Year. Cook teaches printmaking, painting and drawing and directs graduate work. He serves as art advisor to the Arrowhead, a student publication for creative arts. He joined the MC faculty in 1983.

## Just for the Record



**CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, held a commissioning service May 24 for Jessica Storey as she prepares to serve in Zimbabwe, Africa, with the IMB. She is shown with her parents Larry and Pam Storey, James Pickel, and Judi Sullivan.



Rory Lee, Executive Director, Baptist Children's Village, spoke at **FIRST CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, May 24. He was presented a Mother's Day offering check for the Baptist Children's Village for \$10,385.31. Shown are Clark McNair, Lee, David Blackledge, and Ashton Thompson.



**MT. PLEASANT CHURCH, GLOSTER**, honored its mothers on Mother's Day. Shown are Mallory Dawson, youngest mother; Debra Nations, tie for most children present; Hazel Sterling, oldest mother; and Janice Sterling, tie for most children present. Each were presented gift bags by pastor Blaine Stafford.



**SOUTH NETTLETON CHURCH, NETTLETON**, recognized its veterans during a May 24 service.



**NEW HENLEYFIELD CHURCH, HENLEYFIELD**, held a children's dedication May 10.



**FIRST CHURCH, MORTON**, recognized its high school graduates Cole Morgan, Mallory Moore, Allison Massey, and Haley Crapps.



**FIRST CHURCH, LAKE WASHINGTON**, recognizes its graduates, shown with pastor Jimmy McLendon.



**WANILLA CHURCH, MONTICELLO**, held a baby dedication service Mother's Day for the Carter, Shumaker, and Faler families.



Hemmed in Prayer, a sewing ministry of **FIRST CHURCH, PASCAGOULA**, stitched and packed more than 180 items for medical and dental teams to take to Guatemala and Honduras. Over 40 volunteers participated in the project.



Men from **LONGVIEW HEIGHTS CHURCH, OLIVE BRANCH**, led a Preacher School Training at College Heights Church, Casper, Wyoming, May 1-2. The group learned the practical skills of sermon preparation, development, and delivery. Thirty-four laymen, three church planters, and seven pastors participated.



## Just for the Record



**MT. OLIVE CHURCH, SMITHDALE**, recently held a recognition service for their mission organizations. Shown are Mission Friends, GA's, RA's, and Acteens that participated.

### In other Church News:

► **Highland Church, Laurel**, is offering free children's musical books, tracts, and listening CD's from their library. Anyone interested in looking at these can contact Tony Harman at (601) 428-8493 to arrange a time for viewing.



**OAKLAND CHURCH, WALNUT**, held a deacon ordination service May 17. Shown are Ted Dollar, Nick Hopper, and Kyle Weatherly. Don Wilson, interim pastor.



**NESHOBA CHURCH, UNION**, honored music minister Lee Killen for 14 years of service with a reception. Shown are Killen, his wife Jill, and daughters Sydnee and Peyton.

## GIBSON REALTY IS IN TROUBLE!

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The trouble that we're having is keeping a robust inventory of properties for sale. We sell an average of 250 properties a year, so we're always searching for new properties to list.

Gibson Realty & Land Company has been an area leader for over a decade. In fact, we were the #1 United Country office in sales volume in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2014. Our custom marketing is what separates us from the other real estate companies. Give me a call if you're considering selling your property. My free consultation will include the following:

- » A market analysis to determine the value of your property
- » An overview of our marketing program
- » Ways to defer capital gains tax
- » The advantages of your IRA owning land
- » A complimentary aerial photo of your property



**Gibson Realty & Land Company**

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kyle.bass4land@gmail.com



**WEST MCCOMB CHURCH, MCCOMB**, honored Floyd Johnson Apr. 26 for over 50 years of service as deacon and other positions in the church. He has served with the Nail Benders on numerous missions across the United States and made several trips to Brazil.



**GOSS CHURCH, COLUMBIA**, honored its high school and college graduates May 17. Shown are minister of youth Joy McComb, Olivia Broome, Shane Saucier, Lonna Griffith, and pastor Mark McArthur.



**FRIENDSHIP CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN**, honored pastor Chad Yarborough for 12 years of service with a cake and ice cream social. Shown are the Yarborough family: Caylee Grace, Christy, Caleb, Yarborough and Caden, front.



**EAST MOSS POINT CHURCH, MOSS POINT**, recently held its AWANA Closing Ceremonies, giving awards for attendance, scripture memorization, and biblical knowledge. Marilyn Fisher, director.

# ERLC applauds top court's religious liberty decision

**WASHINGTON (BP)** — The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in favor of a Muslim job applicant provided what religious freedom advocates hailed as a wider victory for people of faith.

In an 8-1 decision, the high court ruled June 1 an employer cannot make religious exercise an element in hiring decisions. Associate Justice Clarence Thomas offered the lone dissent.

The justices' opinion favored a federal agency, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), over a clothing retailer, Abercrombie & Fitch, in a case involving the refusal of a store in the chain to hire a young Muslim

woman who wears a headscarf.

The court's brief seven-page decision said the federal law in question "does not demand mere neutrality with regard to religious practices — that they be treated no worse than other practices. Rather, it gives them favored treatment, affirmatively obligating employers not to fail or refuse to hire or discharge any individual... because of such individual's" religious exercise.

The Supreme Court "got this one right," said Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville.

"The court recognized an im-

portant truth: People should not be discriminated against because of their conscientious religious beliefs simply because a business doesn't find their religion sexy enough," Moore said in a statement for Baptist Press.

In its opinion, the Supreme Court returned the case to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, which had overruled a federal judge's decision by determining Abercrombie did not unlawfully discriminate. The 10th Circuit Court, based in Denver, is obligated to reconsider its ruling in light of the justices' opinion.

The case involves Samantha Elauf, who sought a job at

an Abercrombie store in Tulsa, Ok., when she was 17 years old. Reportedly, she knew before an interview with an assistant store manager the retailer's employee dress code banned hats under its "Look Policy" but also understood the company had hired a Jewish worker who wore a yarmulke.

Elauf wore a headscarf to the interview but did not tell the interviewer she wore it as a part of her Muslim faith. The assistant store manager did not ask Elauf why she wore the headscarf. Elauf was not informed Abercrombie refused to let employees — known as "models" in the chain — wear headscarves.

The assistant store manager gave Elauf scores that qualified her to be hired, but the district manager made her lower Elauf's ratings to avoid hiring her when he learned about her headscarf. The EEOC sued Abercrombie & Fitch in behalf of Elauf.

The ERLC signed onto a friend-of-the-court brief as part of a diverse coalition that told the justices the 10th Circuit Court erred by devising a new mandate that says the employee or prospective employee must directly provide the employer with "actual knowledge" of a need for a religious accommodation.

## Gallup pole: Abortion supporters now outnumber pro-lifers in U.S.

**NASHVILLE (BP and local reports)** — Abortion supporters significantly outnumber pro-lifers in the U.S. for the first time in seven years, according to the Gallup 2015 Values and Beliefs poll.

Half of Americans identified themselves as abortion supporters in the poll that has tracked Americans' views on abortion since 2001. Of those polled, 44% identified themselves as pro-life, the same percentage found in 2008, Gallup reported.

The last time pro-abortion Americans accounted for such a large chunk of the populace was in 2008, when they also numbered 50%.

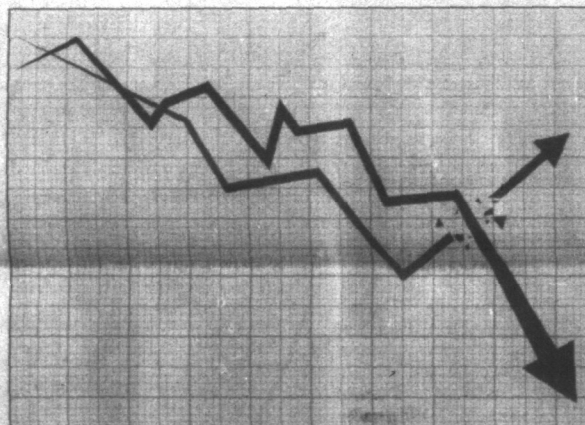
"The pro-choice view is not as prevalent among Americans as it was in the mid-1990s, but the momentum for the pro-life position that began when Barack Obama took office has yielded to a pro-choice rebound," Gallup concluded. "That rebound has essentially restored views to where they were in 2008; today's views are also similar to those found in 2001."

"Pro-choice" is a euphemism for pro-abortion, and is the preferred wording among most pro-abortion organizations in the U.S.

Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd said the faithful must be vigilant in holding to the biblical worldview that human life begins at conception.

"Any decline in America's commitment to the unborn child will lead toward an accelerating desecration of human life, resulting in more abuse, more violence, and more chaotic disruption," Floyd told Baptist Press in a written statement. "God has created us to bring Him glory. When we devalue human life in any way from the womb to the tomb, we are robbing God of His intended glory for each of us."

For most of the past five years, Americans have been almost



"Any decline in America's commitment to the unborn child will lead toward an accelerating desecration of human life, resulting in more abuse, more violence, and more chaotic disruption."

**Ronnie Floyd**  
SBC president

evenly divided between pro-life and pro-abortion, except in 2012 when pro-lifers numbered 50% as compared to 41% pro-abortion, Gallup reported.

Among other results of the poll, 54% of women identify themselves as pro-choice, as compared to 46% of men. Politically, 31% of Republicans identify as pro-choice, almost unchanged from 30% in 2008. Fifty percent of Independents identify as pro-choice, down from 54% in 2008, and 68% of Democrats identify as pro-choice, up from 59% in 2008.

The telephone survey polled 1,024 adults 18 and older in the 50 states and D.C., with a margin of error of plus or minus four percentage points, Gallup said.

Despite a decline in pro-lifers, 2011 abortion rates in the U.S. were the lowest since the 1970s, the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) said in its 2015 State of Abortion in the U.S. States report in January.

After the landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, abortions rose to 1.5 million a year by 1980 and peaked at 1.6 million in 1990, but began dropping in subsequent years, NRLC reported, and were down to just over a million in 2011.

"There is a long way to go, but it is clear that we have made a lot of progress," NRLC said in its report. "Abortions in the United States today are down to levels not seen since the 1970s, when the Supreme Court legalized abortion nationwide. Declining abortion rates and ratios show that this is not merely a statistical anomaly."

Since 1973, an estimated 57 million unborn babies have been aborted.

## CLASSIFIEDS

**MSQC JUNE 11-13, 2015-LAMAR SHELTER BUILDING IN PURVIS, MS HOST GOSPEL ARTISTS OF VARYING STYLES FROM MS, AL, LA, GA, TX, OK.** For Thursday, Friday, Saturday events/times see Facebook: Mississippi Quartet Convention or [www.msqa.com](http://www.msqa.com). \$5 Donation at door with Love Offering taken. Concessions, Prizes, Silent Auctions, RV Hookups and Booth-spaces available. 601-466-4343.

**MULLINS STATION BAPTIST CHURCH IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR.** Mail resumes, along with any audio CDs or website address with a link to view a sample sermon to Search Committee, Mullins Station Baptist Church, 1170 Mullins Station Rd., Memphis TN 38134 or e-mail to [susan@msbcmemphis.org](mailto:susan@msbcmemphis.org).

**FOR SALE 1982 INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL BUS, DIESEL ENGINE, RUNS GOOD, MECHANICALLY SOUND, \$3500.** Lamar Christian School Purvis, MS 601-794-0016.

**GATLINBURG RENTALS:** Cabin \$95/night and Condo \$75/night. Contact: 832 922 0401 or E-mail: [pdw4760@gatt.net](mailto:pdw4760@gatt.net) for information and booking.

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**FULL TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTER:** Great opportunity if you feel called to love kids, lead them to Christ and grow them up in Him. First Baptist Church, Attn: Chris Craig, 200 South Trenton, Ruston, LA 71270

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**AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS:** Gulf Shores & Orange Beach, AL. Rent direct from Christian Family Owners, lowest prices on the Beach. [www.gulfshorescondos.com](http://www.gulfshorescondos.com), 205-556-0368, 205-752-1231, 251-752-2366.

## MS POSITIONS

**ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH, COLUMBUS, MS (EAST CENTRAL MS) IS SEARCHING FOR BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR.** Resumes may be submitted to 6080 Hwy. 45 North, Columbus, MS 39705.

**CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH, MCCOMB, IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME MUSIC MINISTER.** This person should be able to hold on to traditional elements of worship while moving to a more contemporary style. Please send resumes to [cbrccomb@yahoo.com](mailto:cbrccomb@yahoo.com).

**PART-TIME STUDENT MINISTER NEEDED AT EAST COLUMBIA BAPTIST CHURCH IN COLUMBIA, MS.** Please send resumes to: Personnel Committee, 385 Columbia Purvis Road, Columbia, MS 39429, or email to [tim@eastcolumbiabaptistchurch.com](mailto:tim@eastcolumbiabaptistchurch.com).

**BUCATUNNA BAPTIST CHURCH IN CLARKE COUNTY IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR EITHER BI-VOCATIONAL OR FULL-TIME PASTOR.** Please send resumes to: 10906 CR514, Meridian, MS 39301

**SMITHVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME STUDENT MINISTER.** Please send resume to Smithville Baptist Church, P O Box 52, Smithville, MS 38870

**WE ARE SEARCHING FOR A PART-TIME YOUTH PASTOR TO SERVE AT SULPHUR SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH, 331 SULPHUR SPRINGS RD, CONEHATTA, MS 39074.** Resumes may be mailed or emailed to [sulphurspringsbaptist@gmail.com](mailto:sulphurspringsbaptist@gmail.com) or call 601-507-2031.

**NORTH COLUMBIA BAPTIST CHURCH AT 1527 NORTH MAIN STREET COLUMBIA, MS 39429 IS SEARCHING FOR A FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF MUSIC & EDUCATION OR A PART-TIME/BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC.** For more information, please e-mail resumes to [pastor@ncbcm.org](mailto:pastor@ncbcm.org).

**THE MT. OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH IN SMITHDALE, MS IS CURRENTLY RECEIVING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC.** Please send resumes to [mtoivebaptistchurch@live.com](mailto:mtoivebaptistchurch@live.com) or mail to: MtOBC, 5599 MS Hwy 570, Smithdale, MS 39664

**LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH, LIBERTY IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC.** Please send resumes to: Liberty Baptist Church, ATTN: Personnel Committee, PO Box 73, Liberty, MS 39645 or email to [bgeno@libertybaptistchurch.biz](mailto:bgeno@libertybaptistchurch.biz).

**PIONEER BAPTIST CHURCH, LOCATED IN WOODVILLE, MS, IS SEEKING A BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP/MUSIC LEADER.** Resumes can be sent to the attention of the Music Committee at 2636 Highway 563 North, Woodville, MS 39669.

**NEEDED: FULL TIME OR BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN AT ASHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH IN ASHLAND, MS.** Send resumes to Mr. Stanley Poff, 285 Carter Flats, Ashland, MS 38603 or email to [stanleypoff@yahoo.com](mailto:stanleypoff@yahoo.com)



## ABEDINI

cont. from p. 1

Saeed and Naghmeh Abedini are natives of Iran and naturalized American citizens. They have two young children. Naghmeh Abedini and the children live in Idaho.

Saeed Abedini has been imprisoned in Iran, a radical Muslim theocratic dictatorship, since Sept. 26, 2012, because of his Christian faith. He was sentenced Jan. 27, 2013, to eight years in prison on charges he threatened Iranian national security by planting house churches years earlier. He had been under house arrest in Iran since July 2012.

"The Iranian government has repeatedly told Saeed he holds the key to his freedom — but this key would be to deny his faith and return to Islam. Yet, Saeed has refused to deny his faith in Jesus Christ in the face of torture and abuse," Naghmeh Abedini said.

Family members of two other Americans imprisoned in Iran joined Naghmeh Abedini in testifying before Congress. Washington Post reporter Jason Rezaian was arrested more than 10 months ago and charged with espionage. Amir Hekmati is a former Marine who was charged with espionage when he visited his grandmother in Iran in 2011.

Also represented was the family of Robert Levinson, a former FBI agent who disappeared while working as a contract employee for the CIA in 2007.

Some Democratic and Republican lawmakers responded to the testimony by saying they would not support a nuclear deal with Iran that fails to include the release of the jailed Americans.

"It would just be ludicrous and outrageous for us to have a deal with Iran that doesn't include the bringing home of our hostages," New York Democrat Eliot Engel said, according to National Public Radio.

Texas Republican Randy Weber said "Congress should get real serious" about insisting on the Americans' release. There should be "no agreement, period, until Iran releases the hostages," Weber said according to the Washington Post. "I hope John Kerry, President Obama, everybody on their team comes to their senses and says if human rights is not the main thing with this regime, how can you trust them with anything else?"

White House spokesman Josh Earnest has said the Obama administration will not negotiate for the prisoners' release. "We will not allow these American citizens to be used as bargaining chips," he said.

## MC

cont. from p. 1

as a Yellow Ribbon School, which allows veterans to complete their degrees with additional funding.

Last year, MC launched a student organization catering to the needs of military men and women on campus. MC also offers assistance to about 200 veterans or their dependents through our office of veterans outreach," according to the university's statement.

MC has also been named a Service Members' Opportunity College, a U.S. Department of Defense-funded program that ensures service members and their families are given sufficient educational opportunities.

MC President Lee G. Royce said in the university's statement, "MC is committed to honoring our U.S. Armed Forces student veterans, current service members, veteran dependents, and survivors with veteran-focused educational and student support services. MC enthusiastically welcomes the men and women who have served our country."

Royce has been critical of the lack of professionalism with which some national news media outlets and web sites have handled the story. "When news

becomes entertainment and net profit is based on the number of web hits driving sponsorship dollars, [then] civility, truth, and even democracy itself are imperiled."

He encouraged MC supporters following the story to consider all the facts. "One of the most compelling reasons that Mississippi Baptists should continue to support MC (and our other great schools) remains our abiding commitment to the Great Commission. Since 2003 when we launched the Office of Christian Development, 954 MC students have made first-time professions of faith in Christ through the ministries of our campus. One hundred of those students came from overseas, demonstrating the great opportunities we have to share the love of Christ with international students.

"Since 2003, more than 5,000 decisions for Christ have been recorded on our campus through our summer camp ministry and the Will Graham Celebration held on our campus last year. Billy Graham stated 40 years ago that 'the greatest mission field is on the college campus,' and as it was true then, it is even more so today.

"In addition, every year we send out between 25-40 summer missionaries, see 400-500

"MC is committed to honoring our U.S. Armed Forces student veterans, current service members, veteran dependents, and survivors with veteran-focused educational and student support services. MC enthusiastically welcomes the men and women who have served our country."

Lee G. Royce  
MC President

students engaged in ministry work, and impact nearly 600 churches. We also engage in 70,000-100,000 hours of community ministry service each year impacting over 100 different ministries. Each year we host from 6,000-9,000 summer campers through our various Baptist camp ministries.

"We remain committed to the work of evangelism and missions which has always been a call in Baptist life."

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, buildings, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

## Vacation Bible School

► Evansville Church, Cottonville: June 15 - 19, 8 a.m. - noon. Lunch provided.

► Terry's Creek Church, Magnolia: June 15 - 19, 8:30 - 11:30 a.m., Fri., Family Night, 6 p.m.

## LUTER

cont. from p. 1

come a long way, but we've still got a long way to go. We've made progress. However, it's not where we think it should be. Hopefully, this is something that will kick start that and get it to where it needs to be."

NAMB President Kevin Ezell expressed hope that Luter's role will help focus attention on the continuing need for more ethnic Southern Baptist churches.

"Brother Fred loves our convention and our convention loves

him," Ezell said. "I don't know of anyone who would bring more energy and enthusiasm to this role. I am grateful to him for lending his name and his efforts to this cause."

Luter noted that much of the growth in the SBC in recent years has come from ethnic churches.

"This is an opportunity to reach out to people in our cities and towns and help them understand that there's still a percentage of African Americans out there who are lost and still need direction," Luter said. "Hopefully, we can give them a place to connect."

## Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

# THE VILLAGE VIEW



**Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director**

P.O. Box 27  
Clinton, MS 39060-0027  
(601) 922-2242

[www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com)

## GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

### APRIL 2015

#### HONORS

Claudia Rose Wilson  
Mr. & Mrs. John Everett Wilson

### APRIL 2015

#### MEMORIALS

Mrs. Bonnie Abels  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Alexander  
Mrs. Evelyn Adams  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Alexander  
Sidney Adams  
Ann Dillon  
Margaret Causey  
Lenora Whittington  
Maggie Whittington  
Larry Ainsworth  
Mrs. Ollie Faye Jones  
Sam Allman  
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth M. Davis  
Mary Anderson  
Charles & Charlene Renfrow  
Laurie Rager  
Lacey Simmons  
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Young  
G. M. (Billy) Anglin  
Ms. Sammie B. Anglin  
August Hamill  
Mr. & Mrs. Roger W. Arno<sup>1</sup>  
Barry Bagby  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Whitten  
Ruth & Carey Bankston  
Ms. Sammie B. Anglin  
Hugh Bateman  
Mr. & Mrs. Hiram P. Whittington  
Mrs. Mattie Lee Baylis  
Mr. & Mrs. James C. Lindley  
Mary Ruth Beattie  
Mrs. Betty A. Templeton

Sidney H. Beauman Jr.  
Mr. Andy Oakes & Carrie Oakes  
Rev. Mart Bell  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mrs. Louise Blackwell  
Central BC  
Dee Ann Bounds  
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth R. Robertson  
Milford Bowering  
Charles & Charlene Renfrow  
Ms. Sibyl Bourne Bowles  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert F. Morrow  
Mr. & Mrs. Harold Tolar  
Ms. Juanita Tolar  
Mr. & Mrs. Gene D. Saucier  
Mr. & Mrs. John L. Prine  
Grumpy Ole Men, Rawls  
Springs BC  
Dorothy Boyett  
Rev. & Mrs. William M. Tate  
Billie Breland  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Stanford  
Bebe A. Brooks  
Mrs. Libba Curry  
Scooter & Teresa Henderson  
Charles Brown Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert D. Thomas  
Wilma Brown  
Scooter & Teresa Henderson  
Cecil Burford  
Mr. & Mrs. Don Perry  
Milton Burris  
Dr. Lamar Burrow  
Teddy Burton  
Kolola Springs BC  
Mrs. Frances Bush  
Mr. & Mrs. Lester Haddox  
Mr. Pruitt Calvert  
Mrs. Lucille H. Harris  
Dr. Mike Campbell  
Mr. & Mrs. Jay Gore, III  
Mr. & Mrs. Ray Rounsaville  
Mrs. Glenda Carpenter  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mrs. Loraine Carpenter  
Mr. & Mrs. Jay Gore, III

John Choucolli  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Stanford  
William "Ned" Cleveland  
The Ralph Gardner Family  
The Bill Henley Family  
Steve Cobb  
Ms. Jennifer Ferrill Seal  
Harry L. Cole  
Mrs. Harry L. Cole  
John Wesley Cope  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
Hazel Faye Corn  
Salem BC  
Betty Cucci  
Mr. James L. Bell  
Mr. Angus Culliver  
Mr. & Mrs. Lester Haddox  
James Cummings  
Charles & Charlene Renfrow  
Mrs. Patsy Cummins  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Alexander  
Mrs. Faye Davis  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mrs. Oma Steele Davis  
Mr. & Mrs. John W. Potter  
Ann W. Day  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
John Cope and DeLoach Cope  
Mrs. Ann Spradlin  
Mr. Ide B. Dickens  
Mrs. Helen Brown  
Patrick Dixon  
The James E. Dixon Family  
Mr. & Mrs. Will Dodds  
Johnnie & Donna (Dodds)  
Hudson  
James Durr  
Margie McCaffrey  
Judy Murrell  
Randall Tod Dykes  
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Riley  
Ms. Carol England  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Joan Ferguson  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry V. Helms  
Billy McCall & Florence McCall  
Independence School  
Reunion Committee  
Mrs. Jean Fortenberry  
Mr. & Mrs. Scott E. Pittman  
Mr. Leroy Foster  
Branch BC  
Lucy Fowler  
Mr. & Mrs. David R. Jones  
James Richard Garrett  
Mr. & Mrs. Hembree Brandon  
Dr. David George  
Ms. Tina Gilbert Roberts  
Mrs. Beulah Doris Gibson  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
A. L. Gilmore  
Mr. & Mrs. Marvin E. Miller  
Mrs. Evelyn Goss  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Alexander  
Grandparents of Mindy Parker  
John & Dell Hucabees  
Frances Grant  
Ms. LaVerne Halford  
Mrs. Leatrice Randle Griffin  
Dr. & Mrs. Jim Brewer  
Mr. Mark Scooby  
Lois Griffith  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Stanford  
Christine Grubbs  
Arlington Heights BC  
John Guyton  
Mrs. Ann Spradlin  
Syble Dean Hall  
Ms. Edith M. Strickland & Children  
Mr. & Mrs. Byron Dean  
Mr. Lonnie Hancock  
Hebron BC  
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Ms. Mary C. Hannon  
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Hallie Joe Hutto  
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Ms. Ireta W. Graham  
J. V. & Mary K. Parker  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael W. Parker  
Mr. Clink Jennings  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Lovell Jennings  
Dr. Rita Tanksley  
Bobby & Myrtle Black  
Amy Hutchison  
Virginia Jenkins  
Claborne Clements  
Wilbur & Sarah Brunt  
Van Thomas Johnsey  
Mr. & Mrs. James E. Clark  
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry  
Mrs. Bertha Johnson  
Mr. & Mrs. Lester Haddox  
Clint Johnson R.P.H.  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert D. Thomas  
Irene Johnson  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Stanford  
Dr. John W. Johnson  
Ms. Peggy S. Ashley  
Marcus Johnson  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Forbes  
Mr. Marion (Cotton) Johnston  
Mrs. Virginia S. Marcus  
Mr. & Mrs. Rudy Grenn  
Jody Jones  
Ms. Tina Gilbert Roberts  
Ms. Jean Kendrick  
Mr. & Mrs. Hubert T. Kendrick  
Ann Kennedy  
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Tillman  
Mrs. Carol P. Clay  
Mrs. Mary Kirkpatrick  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mrs. Jean Ladner  
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel A. Smith  
Helen Little  
Mr. & Mrs. Lee H. Thompson, Jr.  
Mrs. Betty Loftin  
Mr. & Mrs. Lester Haddox  
W. K. McGee  
Mr. & Mrs. B. R. Taylor  
Mabel Mann  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Stanford  
Jeannette Mars  
Mr. John Davis  
George W. Martin Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Tommy Marshall  
Mr. Jesse T. Matthews Jr.  
Ms. Ida E. Ingram  
Jimmie McDaniel  
Ms. Patsy Kilgore  
Shirley McDaniel  
Mr. & Mrs. David R. Jones  
Rev. Harold McInnis  
Mr. & Mrs. Roy Repsher  
Braxton McKinley  
Mr. & Mrs. Glen D. Fortenberry  
Olive Catherine Meaders  
Helen Brown  
Bo & Linda Surber  
Mr. Rufus Earl Millsaps  
Mr. & Mrs. David R. West, Jr.  
Eleanor Moak  
Mrs. Betty A. Templeton  
Gail Morgan  
The Sam Pole Morgan Family  
Alton Morris  
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel A. Smith  
Matt Munn  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mrs. Cyndi Kennedy Myers  
Mrs. Patricia Triplett  
Jeff Myers  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Stanford  
Dr. Carl G. Nichols Jr.  
Ms. Tina Gilbert Roberts  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
Edward "Babe" H. Odom  
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Flowers  
Mr. Kevin Muscat

Felder Services  
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Edward and Lara Odom  
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Mr. & Mrs. Charles B. Keeler  
Mrs. Zetha Oliphant  
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Jimmy Pace  
Eddie & Delia Speights  
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Parkman  
Jimmie Page  
Mr. & Mrs. Byron Dean  
Derecia Pattie  
Ms. Tina Gilbert Roberts  
Donna Carroll Pell  
Mr. Robert P. Pell  
Ann Phillips  
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Gnemi  
Tommy Polk  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy L. Herrington  
Jim Price  
Ann Dillon  
Margaret Causey  
Lenora Whittington  
Maggie Whittington  
Mrs. Bobby Ray  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Ruby Reeves  
Ms. Seale Pylate  
Frances Riddell  
Mr. & Mrs. Perry E. Atherton  
Mr. Frank T. Rives  
Dr. & Mrs. F. David Rives  
Anne B. Robertson  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank O. Crosthwait, Jr.  
Katherine Ann Robertson  
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth R. Robertson  
Mrs. Mary Nell Rogers  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy H. Bridges  
Mrs. Ernestine Rule  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Dorothy Clark Rumpf  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank O. Crosthwait, Jr.  
Sylvia Lynn Sanders  
Mr. & Mrs. David T. Fancher  
Harold Saucier  
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel A. Smith

## BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent openings, please contact Celeste Cade at [ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com](mailto:ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com) or 601-922-2242.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at [www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com).



## Walking in the Light • 1 John 1:5-2:6

Recently upon entering one of the bathrooms in my house I made a shocking discovery: me! I know that may sound peculiar so allow me to clarify. The windows in our bathrooms are commonly referred to as privacy glass. These windows face the west, so as a result; the sunlight was shining directly into the window at a brilliant level at that time of day. There was no need to turn the lights on, it would have added very little by way of illumination to the sun-filled room. I looked in the mirror and I saw my reflection, but in a whole new way. I quickly realized I had missed a couple of whiskers when I shaved earlier. Next, I spotted a pimple that was previously unnoticed. I also wondered why, at the age of 37, I was still getting pimples. The final and most shocking encounter I had with the mirror was two (not one) gray hairs. It takes a special person to have a pimple and gray hairs at the same time. I immediately left the restroom and commented to my wife that I was suddenly not feeling well. I was not prepared for the "me" I was about to see.

For our time of Bible study together we explore the significance of walking in the light of God. Our author, John, using the metaphor of light in a greatly telling way. He presents and either/or

situation. People can either "walk in the light" (verse 7) or they can "walk in the darkness" (verse 6). The light that day in my bathroom was more than I bargained for because it was so revealing. However, the light was just doing its job. We can either choose to be angry at the light or we can choose to do something about what it reveals. The light is not the problem, we often are.

While the light may reveal our imperfections, it also serves as a call to holiness. The function of the light found in God is not to solely expose our flaws, but also to call us toward something. One hotel chain is well-known for its motto, "We'll leave the light on for you." Those simple words have a profound meaning. Weary travelers can find solace and safe haven if they will simply look for the light. The English word we have in our text that describes this is "fellowship." This type of fellowship (verse 7b) is displayed in our



## Explore the Bible

with Bobby McKay

commitment to both other people and the redemptive blood of Jesus Christ. When Christians come together in the light of the cross, two things should happen: a great brokenness over our own sins and a great thanksgiving over the grace and mercy of God. As we draw nearer to God we will see how great He is and how terrible our sin is.

One of my favorite verses of Scripture is 1 John 1:9. It is a conditional verse, starting with the word "if." If we are willing and able to confess our sins to God, He is more than willing and able to forgive and cleanse us from our sins and all unrighteousness. The best description of confession is to agree with God. Please take note here this is most likely not referring to the initial request for salvation. As believers, we must never forget our need for the continued cleansing only God can provide through Christ. It is a matter of sanctification. We must daily die to ourselves and pursue His holi-

ness. If someone says or pretends to not sin, they are both a liar and someone who does not have the word living within them.

John allows us to get inside his mind and discloses another of the purposes of this correspondence (the first is in 1:4). He wanted them to read his words and as a result; avoid sin. He also reminded them of the fact of when they do find themselves in sin they have a great Advocate in Jesus. By the way, Jesus' advocacy was not limited to the sins of these original hearers. It was not bound by time, region, or culture. 1 John 2:2 shows us the great truth that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world!

After my encounter with the mirror a few weeks ago, I thought about my options. I could measure for blinds or curtains, I could throw the mirror away or I could avoid the bathroom altogether. I had one final option: let the light in and face reality. My brothers and sisters, let the light in! Sure, it is humbling; but in the light is where you will find God. Pursue Him and I promise you a pimple or a gray hair won't even discourage you.

McKay is pastor of Harperville Church, Harperville.

## Be Confident in God's Power • Joshua 3:7-17

Our youngest son, Carson decided to go mud riding recently. Take twelve just-about-to-graduate senior guys and combine them with two trucks, a land rover, a dirt road and a boatload of testosterone...you have a recipe for disaster. Unfortunately for Carson and his vehicle, the mud hole they decided to ride through was deeper than expected. As they exited the vehicle and into the too-deep hole, the pervasive mud ruined their shoes, clothing and sadly, Carson's truck. Next time they go mud riding, I am certain they will include a wench, a rope and mud boots. Today's truth from Joshua 3 finds the Israelites following Joshua across the Jordan River but no mud boots were required.

God had established Joshua as leader of the Israelites after the death of Moses. (See Joshua 1). The first task that God gave Joshua was to lead the people to cross the Jordan River. At the beginning of our lesson today the Lord tells Joshua, "Beginning today I will show the people that you are their leader, and they will know that I am helping you as I helped Moses." God was showing the people that His power does not rest on person, or one situation. He had tapped

Joshua especially to be the leader for the people. Now He was giving His seal of approval by demonstrating His power in the miracle He was about to perform. No doubt some of the people felt that God rested only with Moses or that only Moses could lead them to the Promised Land. God was about to do a last miracle for the people before they entered the land. His plans and purposes for Joshua were also specific. God told him how to direct the priests, the ark, and the people. God wanted to let the Israelites know that He had it all under control.

**Joshua 3:9-13** This section begins with Joshua encouraging the people to "come close and listen". He wanted them to really lean-in, both physically, emotionally and spiritually to hear from God through him. He told them they were going to KNOW that God

was living among them and going to drive out their enemies from the land HE had promised them. Joshua was confident in God's power to deliver on what He said HE would do. For all of the practical, logistical Israelite engineers, Joshua then explains how they would get across the river. In verse 13, "When the feet of the priests who carry

the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, come to rest in Jordan's waters, its waters will be cut off." (HCSB)

God included the specifics that did not rest on anyone abilities but totally on His power.

**Joshua 3:14-17** And so the Ark of the Covenant and the priests go ahead of the people and obediently put their feet in to the river. Joshua reminds us in verse 15, "Now the Jordan overflows its banks throughout the harvest season." In other words, don't think that

this miracle is contributed to a special low-water season. Not only could God stop the waters, He could stop them during the highest levels. As the priest's feet touched the water at its edge it stopped flowing. The scripture tells us that the priests then stood in the middle of the river on dry ground while the people passed onto the other side of the Jordan. The words for "on dry ground" are a Hebrew word, charabah. It means, "on dry ground". No mud boots needed. No slimy stench between their toes or extra tide for the wash from the mud. The good Lord not only provided the miracle by stopping the water, He went ahead and provided an easy pathway by drying the river bed up.

What decision are you facing this week that will require your toes to get in the water? How can you encourage a family member or friend to trust and obey in a pivotal issue? Remember, following Jesus without reservation means you won't need your mud boots—just your toes in the water!

Bowman is Minister of Connection, First Church, Brandon, and a speaker for women's events.

## Bible Studies for Life

with Beth S. Bowman



## Revivals &amp; Homecomings

► **Laurel Church, Neshoba County:** Homecoming, June 14, service, 10:30 a.m., followed by potluck meal, fellowship and singing. Wayne Griffith, speaker; Larry Win-

stead, music.

► **Pineville - Leaf River Church, Smith County:** 58th annual homecoming/cemetery day, June 14; service, 11 a.m., followed by potluck

dinner and cemetery association meeting @ 2 p.m.

► **Coldwater Church, Philadelphia:** Homecoming, June 14; service, 10:30 a.m., followed by potluck dinner; Clay Winstead, speaker; Reuben and Fay Moore, music.

► **Rehobeth Church, Pelahatchie:** Homecoming, June

15; service, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Scott Walters, speaker.

► **Elmo Church, Roxie:** 100th anniversary, June 14; services, 10 a.m., followed by lunch; Matt Buckles, speaker.

► **Providence Church, Tipah County:** 161st anniversary homecoming, June 14;

services, 10:30 a.m., followed by meal; Eugene Walden, speaker.

► **Rocky Mount Church, Calhoun Association:** Homecoming, June 14; services, 10:30 a.m.; Darrell Logan, speaker; Susie Haggard and guest singers, music; Larry W. Haggard, pastor.

# LifeWay Research: Don't give up on unchurched

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — Americans have a surprising openness to Christian churches, even those people who are supposedly turned off to religion, a new survey from LifeWay Research shows.

No matter which denomination is in the name of a church, fewer than half the nonreligious say "it's not for me." Their views are more favorable than unfavorable toward a wide range of faiths: Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Assemblies of God, and non-denominational.

These findings, based on a new survey of denominational opinions by LifeWay Research, may come as a surprise to those who've seen recent headlines. Growing numbers of people who don't identify with any church have gathered considerable media attention, but LifeWay Research vice president Scott McConnell said many of these "nones" aren't as closed to church as some may assume.

"Just because someone has no religious preference does not mean they have closed the door to the Christian church or a denomination as being something that can meet needs in their lives," McConnell said.

## Survey overview

The recent nationwide telephone survey of 1,000 adults of varying ages, backgrounds, and beliefs posed two types of questions. In addition to asking whether nine denominations or faiths are for them, researchers sought to determine whether Americans' image of each group is favorable or unfavorable. Among the overall findings:

- No denomination is ruled out by a majority. People are most skeptical about Pentecostal churches, but even then only 45% declare, "it's not for me."

- Impressions of each denomination are more favorable than unfavorable.

- Many people don't understand denominational differences. For each faith, 20%-35% say they are not familiar enough to form an opinion. This group almost always outranks those with unfavorable views.

- One in five say they are not familiar with Catholic or Baptist faiths. About one in three are unfamiliar with Lutheran, Presbyterian, Assemblies of God, or Pentecostal.

## Americans open

Though they may be puzzled about what a denomination teaches, many Americans are receptive to church, the survey shows. While 40%-48% of the nonreligious (atheists, agnostics, and those with no religious preference) assume such groups as Catholics, Baptists, and Pentecostals are "not for me," a majority don't automatically exclude them.

In addition, anywhere from one-third to half of those from non-Christian religions do not assume the nine denominations named in the study are "not for me."

"One might assume that when someone makes a conscious decision in favor of a certain religious preference, that means 'no' to everything else," McConnell said. "While many are not open, to see half of the 'nones' and a third of those in other religions indicate they are not closed to Christian churches makes us re-think that."

## Methodology

The phone survey of Americans was conducted Sept. 26-Oct. 5, 2014. The calling utilized random digit dialing. Sixty percent of completes were among landlines and 40% were among cell phones. Maximum quotas and slight weights were used for gender, region, age, ethnicity, and education to more accurately reflect the population. The completed sample is 1,000 surveys. The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed plus or minus 3.5%. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

## What's in a name?

In addition, the research shows that a trend in recent years to omit denominational identity from a church's name may not help attract non-members. "It would depend on who you're trying to reach," McConnell said, "but some denominational groups have as much 'brand equity' as non-denominational churches, which have been growing the fastest."

The best-known faiths garner the most approval. Baptist and Catholic, which have the highest rate of familiarity and the highest number of adherents, top the survey for favorable impressions with 61% for Baptists and 57% for Catholics. Most respondents also look favorably on non-denominational churches (53%) and Methodists (52%).

Conversely, only 38% hold a favorable view of Pentecostals, while 35% say they aren't familiar enough to form an opinion. Fewer than half also report favorable impressions of Southern Baptists (49%), Lutherans (46%), Presbyterians (46%), and Assemblies of God (45%).

"It's not necessarily a negative to include the denomination's name," McConnell said, "but in looking at the overall totals there are problems with preconceived notions with any name signaling where you are, theologically or historically. It also appears the Assemblies of God is probably pulling up the Pentecostal perception and Southern Baptists are negatively impacting the Baptist brand."

People are most open to Baptist and non-denominational churches, the study found, with "it's not for me" chosen by only 36% for Baptist churches, 37% for non-denominational churches, and 39% for Southern Baptists. No faith group is ruled out by more than half of those surveyed, but 41% say the Lutheran church is not for them and 40% feel that way about the Assemblies of God, Methodists, and Presbyterians.

Though most Americans report favorable opinions of Catholicism, 42% say the Catholic faith is not for them. An even higher share (45%) feels that way about the Pentecostal church.

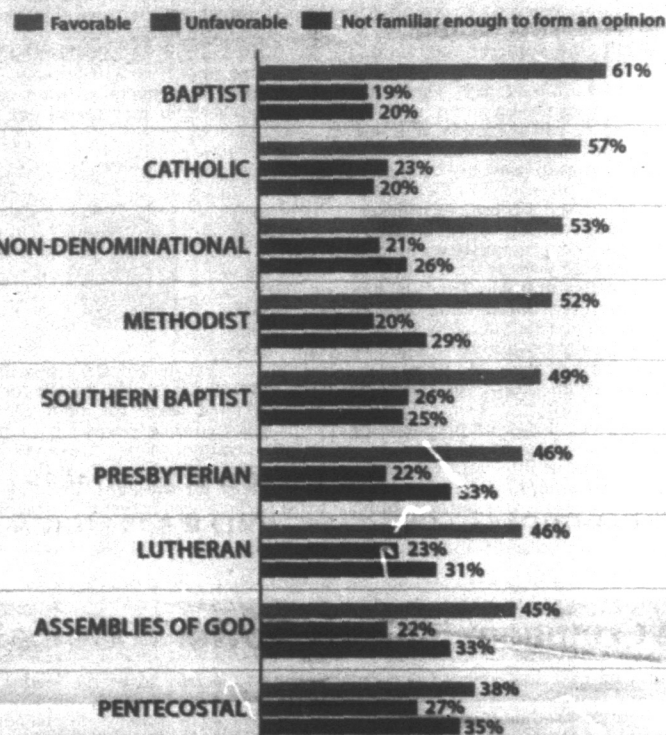
Education also influences perceptions. For example, those with a graduate degree are more likely to assume groups like Baptists and Pentecostals are not for them than people with a bachelor's degree or less education.

## Trouble spot

When it comes to the church's future, McConnell points to one finding that should concern each denominational group tested. More than four in 10 young adults age 18-24 indicate various denominations are not for them.

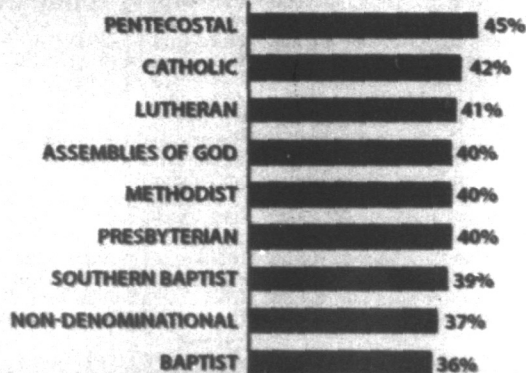
## AMONG AMERICANS:

### What is your impression of the following faith groups?



## AMERICANS WHO AGREE:

### "When I see a church named the following, I assume it is not for me."



"While young adults are often testing their views as they enter their 20s, about half do not perceive Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Lutheran, or non-denominational churches as places for them as they explore," McConnell says.

LifeWay Research is a division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, based in Nashville.

According to the LifeWay Research web site, "LifeWay Research assists and equips church leaders with insight and advice that will lead to greater levels of church health and effectiveness. Frequent surveys on today's church and culture demonstrate our knowledge of the dynamics of ministry today and our understanding of the realities of the culture we live in."